

Independence Movements, Citizenship, and Human Rights EURO-3000 (3 credits)

Spain and Ireland: Geopolitics and the Future of Europe

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

This seminar provides a comparative approach to the analysis and comprehension of national minorities, pro-independence movements, and the emerging issues around human rights and citizenship in the context of the European Union. The Basque, Catalan, and Irish cases provide excellent case studies for an understanding of the underlying dynamics between EU members and national minorities and post-conflict societies. We will look closely at these dynamics as rooted in history and expressions of current issues that are shaping contemporary Europe, namely human rights and the very meaning of European citizenship. Overall, the seminar provides a comparative overview of the different perspectives about the struggle for self-determination and human rights in Spain, Ireland, and Europe.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Examine how European countries and their civil societies are reacting to the current threats to core values of the EU such as freedom of expression, multilateralism, human rights, and democracy.
- Compare the way ethnic and national cleavages are shaping European politics;
- Understand the legal and institutional frameworks in which conflicts are being confronted by the EU and post-conflict countries such as Ireland and Spain.
- Develop a theoretical and empirical understanding of the impact of regional independence movements on European integration.
- Critically engage with the impact of regional independence movements and enlargement processes on regional integration and the future of the EU.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to issues concerning policy, law, human rights and social movements in Spain and the EU through in-country expert lectures and field visits in a wide range of venues and regional locales.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners. The methodological approach will be participatory, and experiential, and will aim to help the student develop a multidimensional understanding of, political and social expressions of regional independence movements, regional identities, institutional and societal adaptation to autonomies, and the ongoing interpellation to XX century consensus such as representative democracy.

Required Texts

- Gillespie, R. and Gray, C. (2018). *Contesting Spain? The Dynamics of nationalist movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country*, Routledge
- Radden Keefe, Patrick (2019). *Say Nothing: A true story of murder and memory in Northern Ireland*, HARPERCOLLINS PUB.
- Rose, Richard (2020), *Europe's democratic deficit and Democratic surplus*, in *How Referendums Challenge European Democracy: Brexit and Beyond*, Palgrave MacMillan.

Assignments and Evaluation

Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth, and argumentation, presentation of evidence and use of comparative perspective.

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Text Analysis (30%)

Students choose two texts from the list of their course required readings and engage with the main argument in each text. The text analysis should demonstrate the student's capacity to synthesize arguments, integrate data collected through class lectures and field visits, and provide critical insights into how issues dealt with in the two texts could be approached from a policy or legal perspective. The paper should be 3-5 pages long and should also demonstrate the student's familiarity with policy discourse or methods of legal interpretation.

2) Oral Presentation (20%)

Students will be required to present orally and creatively at the end of the thematic seminar highlighting the most relevant and important issues discussed in class and on the different excursions. Students choose one policy or legal issue that illustrates the challenge of the nation state by the autonomy of a particular region (Basque or Catalonia) and elaborate on how course lectures, readings, and field visits have helped (or not) map viable approaches to the issue at hand.

3) Comprehensive Essay Exam (40%)

The comprehensive essay exam will consist of a 3-page essay which should demonstrate the student's capacity to synthesize and engage critically with main policy and legal arguments addressed through lectures, readings, or field visits throughout the course. Students will be provided with two essay questions to choose from.

4) Class Attendance and Participation (10%)

Attendance during the thematic seminar is mandatory and your grade will reflect your involvement in class and during other activities and excursions. This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions, and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

Assessment

Text Analysis	30%
Oral Presentation	20%
Comprehensive Essay Exam	40%
Class Attendance and Participation	10%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

Program Expectations

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will

always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.

- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.]

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

Course Schedule

Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lectures' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Comparative Approach to European Regional Autonomy

This module will introduce students to the current complexities of the construction of citizenship and its relationship with national minorities in the context of the European Union. Through the cases of Spain, Ireland and others, this module seeks to analyze, not only the specificities of these paradigmatic cases, but also from a comparative perspective, issues such as emerging self-determination and pro-independence movements, identity preservation, and collective rights, as well as the role and effects that these may have over the European Union.

Sessions may include:

- Spain, European Integration, and Regional Autonomy
- European Integration and Minority Nationalist Parties
- Regional Autonomy and Institutional Adaptation in Europe
- Self-Determination and Pro-Independence Movements in Europe
- Public Policies in the Context of Autonomy Movements in Europe
- Political Expressions of the Ethnic/National Cleavage
- Cultural Identity and Regional Minorities in Spain and Ireland
- Collective and Political Rights of Regional Minorities in Europe

Required Readings

- Bengoetxea Joxerramon (2019) "Secession v Forceful Union". A provisional enquiry into the right to decide to secede and the obligation to belong, in *Between Democracy and Law*, Routledge
- Downs, W. M. (2002). Regionalism in the European Union: Key concepts and project overview. *Journal of European Integration*, 24(3), 171-177. DOI:10.1080/07036330220152204
- Coppieters, B. (2018). The EU's Policies towards Contested States. In *Secession and Counter-Secession: An International Perspective*. Barcelona: CIDOB Edicions, Barcelona Center for International Affairs.
- Bourne, Angela (2021) Catalan Independence as an 'Internal Affair'? Europeanization and Secession After the 2017 Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Catalonia in García, Agustín (2021) *Catalan Independence and the Crisis of Sovereignty*, Palgrave MacMillan.

Recommended Readings

- Watson, M. (Ed.). (1990). *Contemporary minority nationalism*. Psychology Press, New York.
- Eklundh, E. (2017). Populism, Hegemony, and the Phantasmatic Sovereign: The Ties Between Nationalism and Left-Wing Populism. In *Podemos and the New Political Cycle*. Springer, New York, 123-146.
- Coller, X., and Cordero, G. and Echavarren, J. (2017). National and Regional Identity. In *Political Power in Spain: The Multiple Divides between MPs and Citizens*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coller, X., Jaime-Castillo, A. M., & Mota, F. (Eds.). (2017). *Political Power in Spain: The Multiple Divides Between Mps and Citizens*. Springer.
- León, S., Mota, F., & Salvador, M. (2018). The Organization of Spain: Ideology, Territory and Representation in the State of Autonomies. In *Political Power in Spain*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 245-264.
- Elias, A. (2013). *Minority nationalist parties and European integration: a comparative study*. Routledge, London and New York.

Module 2: The Basque: Regional Autonomy and Nationalism

This module focuses on the historical construction of Basque identity, Basque identity markers, and historical signposts leading up to the emergence and development of Basque nationalism.

Lectures, field visits, and meetings with politicians and theorists of Basque regional autonomy provide insights into the rise and dissolution of ETA organization and specificities of the Basque regional autonomy model, known as the Ibarretxe Plan. The Ibarretxe Plan, approved by the Basque Parliament in 2004, has since guided the relation between the Basque Country and the central government in Madrid.

Sessions may include:

- Constructing Basque Nationalism
- ETA and the Central State: From Violence to Negotiation
- Cultural Rights and the Right to Independence
- The Basque Model of Regional Autonomy
- Field Excursion to the Guernica
- Basque Perception of the Catalanian Independence Referendum
- The Political Economy of Basque Regional Autonomy
- Basque Political Parties and the Nationalist Movement

Required Readings

- Anton, E. G. (2012). The analysis of the framing processes of the Basque peace movement: The way Lokarri and Gesto por la Paz changed society. *ICIP Working Papers*, (1), 1-44.
- Casquette, Jesus (2013) "Commemorative Calendar and Reproduction of Radical Basque Nationalism" *Politics, Religion & Ideology*.
- De la Calle, Luis and Sanchez-Cuenca, Ignacio (2013) "Killing and voting in the Basque country: An exploration of the electoral link between ETA and its political branch". *Terrorism and Political Violence* Volume 25, 2013 - Issue 1: Violence, Elections, and Party Politics
- Letamendia, Francisco (2011) "ETA: political violence, Its Historical Evolution and Conflict Resolution" in Ibarra, Pedro and Iruj, Xabier (2011) *Basque Political Systems*, Center of Basque Studies, University of Nevada.

Recommended Readings

- Ahedo, Igor (2011) *Political Institutions and Mobilization in Iparralde*", in Ibarra, Pedro and Iruj, Xabier (2011) *Basque Political Systems*, Center of Basque Studies, University of Nevada.
- Roach, S. C. (2017). *Cultural Autonomy, Minority Rights and Globalization*. New York: Routledge.
- Murua, I. (2017). *Ending ETA's Armed Campaign. How and Why the Basque Armed Group Abandoned Violence*. London and New York: Routledge.

Module 3: Catalonia: Autonomy and the Debate about Independence

This module which is offered during the excursion to Girona and Barcelona aims to provide students with an understanding of the constitutional, legal and interpretative framing of the debate around the Catalanian claim and movement for self-determination and independence. Through meetings with political and social actors, as well as with academics, students

appraise the multidimensional complexities of Catalonia's unilateral claim for independence and the power struggle between the national government and Catalonia's parliament.

Sessions may include:

- Franco Regime and Catalan Identity
- National Identity and Cultural Policy in Catalonia
- The Political Economy of Catalonian Identity
- Catalan Parliament, Political Parties, and National Government
- Catalonia's Independence Movement and Constitutional Crisis in Spain
- International Law and Catalonia's Declaration of Independence
- Secession in the Catalan Case

Required Readings

- Cramer, Kathryn (2018) "Political power and civil counterpart: The complex dynamic of the Catalan independence movement", in Gillespie, R. and Gray, C. (2018) *Contesting Spain? The Dynamics of nationalist movements in Catalonia and the Basque Country*, Routledge
- Ubasart, Gemma (2021) "The Independence", in García, Agustín (2021) *Catalan Independence and the Crisis of Sovereignty*, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Zheng, X. (B.). (2014). Can Catalonia achieve independence through a unilateral declaration of independence under international law? *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*. Accessed: <http://jtl.columbia.edu/can-catalonia-achieve-independence-through-a-unilateral-declaration-of-independence-under-international-law/>

Recommended Readings

- Astrid Barrio & Juan Rodríguez-Teruel (2017) Reducing the gap between leaders and voters? Elite polarization, outbidding competition, and the rise of secessionism in Catalonia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40:10
- Cramer, K. (2008). *Catalonia: National identity and cultural policy 1980-2003*. University of Wales Press.
- Dalle Mule, E. (2017). *The Nationalism of the Rich: Discourses and Strategies of Separatist Parties in Catalonia, Flanders, Northern Italy and Scotland*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Zamorano, M. M. (2017). Cultural policy governance, sub-state actors, and nationalism: a comparative analysis based on the Spanish case. *Debats. Revista de cultura, poder i societat*. 2. 79-94. 10.28939/iam.debats-en.2017-5.
- Gross, L. (1984). The right of self-determination in international law. In *Essays on International Law and Organization*. Springer, Dordrecht. 257-275.

Module 4: Ireland: Independence, Violence, Democracy, and Reunification?

During this week classes will be delivered in Ireland during our two-week excursion to the Republic of Ireland and Belfast. Ireland offers us a context of successful independence struggle at the beginning of the XX century, post-conflict tensions and political violence in the Ulster, and post Brexit incipient reunification discussions, that offer our students an efficient comparative perspective related to both the Basque and the Catalan cases.

This week provides the student with the opportunity to learn about the identity construction of Ireland post-independence, its consolidation as an independent country, the effects of violence on its society, as well as current discussions such as direct democracy methods, feminist movements and the effect of Brexit on Ireland as a whole. All of the latter will be delivered to students by local academics, social and political actors, and organizations.

Sessions may include:

- Historical Overview of Irish Independence and Nation Construction
- Irish Integration to the EU
- Irish Democracy, Social Movements, and Direct Democracy
- Political Violence and Post-conflict in Ireland
- Historical Memory and Reconciliation
- EU, Brexit and Ireland
- The Backstop and its Lingering Effects

Required Readings

McLoughlin, P. (2013). The SDLP and the Europeanization of the Northern Ireland problem. In K. Hayward, & M. Murphy (Eds.), *The Europeanisation of party politics in Ireland, North and South* (pp. 187–204). Routledge.

Murphy, M (2019) The Brexit crisis, Ireland and British–Irish relations: Europeanisation and/or de-Europeanisation? *Irish Political Studies*, Volume 34, 2019 - Issue 4: Ireland and EU Crisis Governance: Continuity and Change in the Shadow of the Financial Crisis and Brexit

Simpson, K (2019) “European Union crises and Irish public opinion: continuity and change in patterns of support”, *Irish Political Studies*, Volume 34, 2019 - Issue 4: Ireland and EU Crisis Governance: Continuity and Change in the Shadow of the Financial Crisis and Brexit

Recommended Readings

Anderson, J and Dowd, L (1999) *Contested Borders: Globalization and Ethnonational Conflict in Ireland*

Connolly, T. (2018). *Brexit and Ireland: The dangers, the opportunities, and the inside story of the Irish response*. Penguin.

David McKittrick and David McVea's (2012) *Making Sense of the Troubles: A History of the Northern Ireland Conflict*, Penguin.

Module 5: Regional Autonomy, and Democracy Challenges in Current Europe

This module focuses on a critical assessment of Europe’s regional autonomy model and explores possible institutional reforms to accommodate rising regional independence movements and the challenges that these and other issues create for contemporary European democracies and human rights.

Sessions may include:

- EU Institutional Reform in the Context of Regional Autonomy
- Brexit and the Future of the EU
- Democratic Innovations in Europe
- Democratic Tools for EU citizens
- Alternative Policies for New Regional Autonomy Models
- Is the Referendum the Effective Plebiscite Model to Conflict Resolution?

Required Readings

- Hix, Simon (1999) "Introduction: Explaining the EU Political System" in Hix, Simon (1999) *The Political System of the European Union*
- Ruiz Robledo, A. (2013). Spanish Autonomous Communities and EU Policies. *Perspectives on Federalism*, 5:2, 29-50. Retrieved: http://www.on-federalism.eu/attachments/160_download.pdf
- Russack, Sophia (2019) Pathways for Citizens to engage in EU policymaking, in Blockmans, S. and Russack, S. (1999) *Direct Democracy in the EU. The Myth of a Citizens' Union*, CEPS, Brussels, Rowman & Littlefield International, London

Recommended

- Alekseev, A (2021) "It is in the nation-state that democracy resides" How the populist radical right discursively manipulates the concept of democracy in the EU parliamentary elections, *Journal of Language and Politics*
- Della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., Ribas, A. S., & Portos, M. (2017). *Social movements and referendums from below: direct democracy in the neoliberal crisis*. Policy Press
- Fernando Mendez and Mario Mendez (2017) "Direct Democracy and the European Union" in Saskia P. Ruth, Yanina Welp and Laurence Whitehead (2017) *Let the People Rule? Direct Democracy in the Twenty-First Century*.